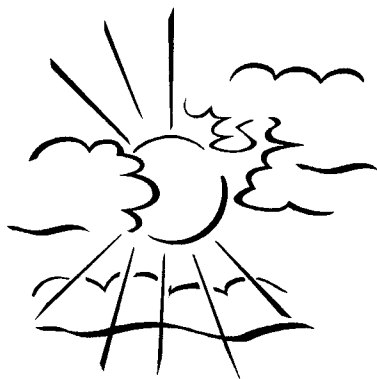


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Human
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Wednesday, August 17, 2005

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Audit finds more than 320 foster parents with criminal pasts

Wednesday, August 17, 2005

BY AMY F. BAILEY

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Detroit Free Press

LANSING - More than 350 foster parents and other adults living with foster children were convicted of crimes ranging from sexual assault to domestic violence to drug possession, according to a state audit.

The report by the Michigan Office of the Auditor General found 321 foster care providers and 32 other adults living with foster children who had criminal convictions as recent as 2003 that should have prevented the state from placing foster children with them.

In a randomly selected group of 16 foster care providers with criminal records, auditors said the state Department of Human Services could not show that caseworkers did the required background checks on 12. Among those 12, auditors found five drug convictions, five assaults, including one with a weapon, and two convictions of domestic violence.

Department director Marianne Udow said the audit only reviewed the way the state processes foster care cases, emphasizing that the 19,100 children in the system are safe.

"While this audit is important, it is not looking overall at the issues of whether or not children are safe. We have independent data to show that overall, Michigan is doing a good job of keeping children safe," Udow said Tuesday in a telephone interview.

State auditors reviewed computerized criminal history information from December 1998 to December 2003 for 12,900 foster care providers and adults in licensed foster homes. The audit released Wednesday covers DHS records between Oct. 1, 2000 and May 31, 2004.

Auditors also found that the department did not make sure its caseworkers were making required visits to foster children, their biological parents and foster parents. The visits allow caseworkers to check on the children and their environment.

In their review of 77 local DHS offices and 29 foster care agencies, auditors only found evidence to show that caseworkers made 1,487 visits, or about two-thirds, of the 2,205 required.

Auditors were particularly critical of the department for failing to get periodic updates on the criminal backgrounds of foster care licensees who are related to their foster children.

In six selected foster homes that had an adult with a criminal background, auditors found five who were convicted of a crime after the department did a background check. Two were criminal sexual conduct convictions and three were for domestic violence.

"Considering the seriousness of the identified convictions that occurred after the date DHS had originally performed background checks, it is imperative that DHS develop a process to periodically perform background checks," the report said.

The department disputed the audit's findings, arguing that forms reported missing for 11 of the 12 foster care providers cited by auditors did not exist when their file was first opened. Officials also disagreed with the audit's recommendation to do periodic background checks.

Udow said the federal government does not require periodic background checks and the department would need additional funding to comply if the checks were mandated.

She attributed many of the audit's findings to early retirement offerings in 1997 and 2002 that prompted a few thousand experienced employees to leave the department. DHS hired new workers to keep down the size of caseloads but lost valuable expertise, she said.

Udow said the department will soon start using a new computer system that will take care of some of the problems cited in the audit by making it easier for caseworkers to process cases and file paperwork.

Highlights of audit on state foster care system

Highlights of an audit by the Michigan Office of the Auditor General on Michigan's foster care program managed by the state Department of Human Services.

Auditors said the department did not:

- Make sure caseworkers were performing and documenting criminal background checks on potential foster parents and other adults that would be living with foster children.
- Do periodic background checks for foster parents and other adults who already are living with foster children.
- Ensure that its caseworkers performed and documented required visits with foster children, their biological parents and foster parents.
- Sufficiently monitor agencies it contracts to place foster children to make sure they effectively delivered services.
- Make certain children in foster care received required basic health care services.
- Ensure that caseworkers prepared plans that assess the needs and progress of foster children and any relevant services they receive.

Mich. group joins Medicare fight

August 17, 2005

BY TIM MARTIN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

A statewide medical group has joined forces with the American Medical Association to fight against a proposed cut in Medicare reimbursements to doctors.

The federal government has proposed reducing payments to doctors through Medicare by about 4.3% next year. Cuts would continue over a 6-year period.

The Michigan State Medical Society is among the groups saying that some doctors may quit seeing Medicare patients if the reimbursement cut takes effect. Michigan has about 1.5 million patients covered by Medicare, the government health program for the nation's elderly.

"If you can see a disaster coming, and you can act to prevent a disaster, why wait?" asked John Armstrong, a Florida doctor and member of the board of trustees of the American Medical Association. "The time to act is now."

Armstrong and AMA representatives were in Michigan on Tuesday to try to persuade doctors and patients to lobby against the Medicare cuts.

Federal officials say they have little choice where the cuts are concerned. As Medicare costs have continued to spiral above estimates the past few years, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, based in Baltimore, is required by law to adjust payments downward.

The rate cut would cost Michigan physicians an estimated \$109 million next year, the medical groups say.

The gap between what it costs doctors to treat patients and what they receive in Medicare reimbursement continues to grow, Armstrong said. An AMA survey suggests 38% of physicians would stop taking new Medicare patients if the reimbursement cuts take effect Jan. 1.

As the cuts continue, more doctors could even question whether to keep the Medicare patients they already have, Armstrong said.

"Michigan physicians want to keep treating their Medicare patients, but they are concerned about harsh Medicare cuts," Michigan State Medical Society President Alan Mindlin said in a news release.

The drop in Medicare reimbursement rates could be a double whammy for Medicare patients. Not only do they risk losing doctors, but their premiums could increase to cover the program's rising costs.

Premiums already are expected to increase more than 14% next year.

Bills to stop the payment cuts already have been introduced in Congress.

U.S. Sens. Debbie Stabenow and Carl Levin, both Michigan Democrats, are sponsoring a bill that would help preserve payments, the AMA said.

It added that similar bills in the House have drawn support from U.S. Reps. Dale Kildee, a Flint Democrat, and Republicans Thaddeus G. McCotter of Livonia, Joe Schwarz of Battle Creek, Dave Camp of Midland, and Fred Upton of St. Joseph.

The Medicare and Medicaid Services agency plans to accept public comments on its proposed rule until Sept. 30 and publish a final rule in November.

Medical society fights reduction of doctors' fees

State group: Cuts to Medicare rates harm patient care

On the Web

8/17

► Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services:
www.cms.hhs.gov

► American Medical Association: www.ama-assn.org

By TIM MARTIN

Associated Press

EAST LANSING — A statewide medical group has joined forces with the American Medical Association to fight against a proposed cut in Medicare reimbursements to doctors.

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Column: You get what you pay for

Monday, August 15, 2005

By Sharon Emery-Booth Newspapers

If you think the dramatic bolt of the service workers from the AFL-CIO last month has nothing to do with the muted announcement of findings by the state's Medicaid Long Term Care Task Force, you need to get a grip.

Discontented service workers, in the form of home help workers, could be your problem sooner or later, if you or your parents live long enough. That's assuming you're able-bodied and not already in need of assistance that helps people stay clear of nursing homes.

In case you missed it, the task force announced in early June that the state needs to get started, pronto, on a system allowing people to come to just one place to learn about all their long-term care options and to receive that care where they want it, including at home. That's where the home help workers come in.

Despite the presence of several hundred elderly and disabled people on the Capitol lawn for the announcement, the whole affair got little notice. Even though Gov. Jennifer Granholm tried to add some bling by issuing an executive order to start implementing some of the recommendations right away.

In contrast, the AFL-CIO split was front-page news. The Service Employees International Union and the Teamsters broke from the 50-year-old federation, arguing it was out of touch with the new global, service-based economy. They said they didn't want to focus on raising money to influence politicians, but on raising membership to influence the workplace.

The potential for some of that influence came to Michigan in April, when 41,000 Michigan home care workers joined the SEIU.

The average wage of direct care workers in Michigan is \$9.27 an hour, according to a 2003 study by Hollis Turnham, Michigan policy director for the Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute, and Steven Dawson. Most of the workers don't have health insurance for themselves or their families, and job training is inadequate or nonexistent, the study found.

Those are the facts, even though most politicians insist direct care workers' jobs are among the most important in the land -- providing essential services, such as bathing, feeding, administering medication -- to elderly and disabled people trying desperately to stay in their homes.

Is it any wonder 65 percent of direct care workers quit in any given year?

The union will be negotiating for better pay and benefits, but union officials say the key is to get the state -- which ultimately pays most of the workers -- to rebalance its spending by putting more into home care and less into nursing homes.

Only 19 percent of Michigan's \$1.7 billion long-term care budget goes for home or community-based care, even though nursing homes cost about \$100 a day more than home care. That's because the system was set up in the 1960s, at a time when the state needed to build a nursing home system in order to get federal Medicaid dollars for long-term care.

So now it takes special federal waivers to get money directed to home care instead of nursing homes.

"Without fundamental changes in both public policy and employer practices, Michigan will be unable to find enough hands to help all the people who need long-term care services," Turnham's report concluded. Currently 150,000 people are served each year by Michigan's long-term care system. Hopefully there'll be room for you.

State pushes health reform

S. Carolina proposes accounts for state's 850,000 on Medicaid. Critics fear service cuts.

By Kevin Freking / Associated Press

Wednesday, August 17, 2005

Detroit News

WASHINGTON -- On the left, they're calling it radical. On the right, the buzzword is bold.

Either way, South Carolina is proposing major changes in Medicaid, the giant federal-state health insurance program for the poor and disabled.

The state says its proposal to establish personal health accounts for most of the state's 850,000 Medicaid recipients will "redefine health care in the United States." The account would be used to purchase private health insurance, or pay for care directly. The amount of money allocated to each account would depend on the person's age, sex and physical condition.

That's much different from the way Medicaid operates. Now, those whose incomes are low enough and who meet other eligibility requirements are entitled to receive certain approved health care services regardless of costs.

South Carolina would cap how much it will spend on a recipient, and if health care costs more than the account will pay for, then the low-income people would have to make up the difference themselves.

States have to get waivers from the federal government when they want to use federal Medicaid funds in ways not authorized in federal law. But the implications of South Carolina's waiver request, contained in a 42-page document submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in June, extend far beyond the Palmetto State.

If South Carolina's plan is approved, analysts believe other states will seek similar changes. Eventually, the experiment could influence national policy, said Nina Owcharenko, a senior health care analyst with the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank.

South Carolina's request is based on the belief Medicaid has created incentives for beneficiaries to seek health care services without regard for the costs.

South Carolina spends nearly 19 percent of its budget on Medicaid. That is expected to grow to 24 percent in five years, said Robert Kerr, the director of the state's Health and Human Services Department.

Some analysts say South Carolina's proposal amounts to a cut.

Judith Solomon, a senior fellow at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal think tank, said many South Carolina residents would be priced out of health care.

The monster in Michigan

Like all of the states, Michigan is grappling with the skyrocketing cost of meeting the health needs of the poor. To cope, the state has dramatically cut critical Medicaid services -- ranging from child care and adult foster care licensing to food inspections and liquor control. Some facts about Medicaid in Michigan:

- One-quarter of Michigan's general fund, its main checkbook, goes to Medicaid.
- One in seven Michiganders receives Medicaid.
- Since its beginning in 1967, the cost of Medicaid has increased at 10 times the inflation rate.
- 73 percent of Medicaid recipients are pregnant women, children or families; 27 percent are elderly citizens.
- Elderly, blind and disabled people make up 27 percent of Medicaid recipients, but account for 70 percent of all expenditures.
- Including federal funds, the state spends more than \$7 billion on Medicaid -- more than every other area of the state budget except public schools.

Related reports

State moves to take kids in gun case

Wednesday, August 17, 2005

By Ken Kolker

The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- A young mother who allegedly knew a loaded and cocked handgun was in her home -- before her 6-year-old son accidentally shot her 4-year-old daughter -- will fight the state's attempt to take her children, her attorney said.

"The goal is to get her kids back," said Carl Taylor, attorney for 26-year-old Susana Pagan, whose daughter, Shania, continues to recover from a shot that injured her leg and arm.

"She'll do whatever she needs to do to have her kids returned to her care."

Pagan wiped tears Tuesday as a Kent County Family Court referee took the first step toward terminating parental rights to her three children -- Shania, 4, Steven, 6, and Shanin, 9.

"The one thing that concerns me the most is the loaded, allegedly cocked, gun," referee Marie Kessler told Pagan while authorizing a neglect/abuse petition to terminate her rights.

Children's Protective Services caseworker Amy Cyrus recommended the children be placed with a "suitable relative" or a licensed foster home pending the outcome of the termination case.

"I believe the children would be at substantial risk of harm if left in her care," Cyrus testified.

"There was a gun in her home, and she was aware it was there."

Charles Clapp, an attorney appointed to represent the children, asked for counseling for the mother and that she be allowed to have supervised visits with her children.

Steven Pagan, 6, a kindergartner last year at Kentwood's Brookwood Elementary School, accidentally shot his sister Sunday in a bedroom of their apartment at 729 Fifth St. NW, Grand Rapids police said. Their mother was home at the time, police said. No charges have been filed. Police refused to say who owned the gun. The mother was living with her 20-year-old boyfriend who wasn't there at the time, police said.

CONTINUED

State moves to take kids in gun case

Page 2 of 2

Her attorney said she appeared to be a good mother.

"She's been standing vigil at the hospital, appropriately," he said.

Pagan's oldest child, Shanin, has lived with her maternal grandmother, Susan Switzer, for most of her life. Her mother was 16 and in jail -- charged with kidnapping and assault in a gang-related case involving torture -- when she was born. Her mother later served 2 to 10 years in prison for assault less than murder.

Shanin's father, Leon Thomas, also served prison time for the kidnapping and assault.

Steven also has been staying with his maternal grandmother since the shooting, while his little sister remains in fair condition at Spectrum Health's DeVos Children's Hospital.

The father of Steven and Shania, Anthony Ashley, 33, of Muskegon Heights, told the referee on Tuesday that he wants his children.

"I love my kids," he said outside the courtroom. "My main thing is I want the Lord in my children's lives."

The court referee Tuesday told the mother she can still salvage her family.

"I want to give you a chance to work (on) this," Kessler said as the mother cried.

"I know," the referee said. "It's really hard."

Mother of Four Year Old Shooting Victim Loses Custody

Keith Baldi

Created: 8/16/2005 5:44:23 PM

Updated: 8/16/2005 10:33:54 PM

Grand Rapids- A Grand Rapids family is being split up after a six year old accidentally shot his little sister in the leg.

The mother was in court Tuesday. Child Protective Services says Susan Pagan had a loaded, cocked gun in her house, that she knew was there.

Her four-year-old daughter Shania was the victim of that weapon Sunday, and that was enough for Pagan to lose custody of her children for now.

According to CPS, the incident highlights a substantial risk of harm to Pagan's three children.

A family court referee agreed Tuesday removing them from her home.

"She wants them back ... that's her life," said Pagan's lawyer Carl Taylor.

Taylor said she will continue to fight for her children.

They will be taken, but it wasn't determined whether they'll go to a family member or foster home.

Shania's father Anthony Ashley says he wants to be involved.

"I want my children, I want God in their lives," Ashley said.

Pagan's lawyer says she will most likely go through counseling, parenting classes and a psychological evaluation.

Then she'll be back in court this fall to see if she'll get her kids back.

Web Editor: Keith Baldi, Grand Rapids Metro Team Reporter

Detroit Free Press

August 17, 2005

Accused police officer dies at his own hand

A Department of Public Safety officer accused of molesting two girls shot and killed himself in a station locker the same day he was to be placed on administrative leave, department officials said.

Officer Matthew Hallman, 40, a road patrol officer and 13-year veteran of the Kalamazoo department, was found dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound at the Bryant Street station Friday afternoon.

Chief Dan Weston, who heads the city's combined police and fire department, said he had asked Hallman to meet with him after learning that the Calhoun County Prosecutor's Office had issued a warrant for the officer's arrest.

"He would have been placed on administrative leave and his police authority would have been removed and an internal investigation would have been conducted," Weston told the Kalamazoo Gazette for a story published Tuesday.

Weston said Hallman told department officials in October that a female was accusing him of inappropriately touching her. That month, Public Safety officials contacted investigators in Portage, where Hallman lived and where the acts reportedly occurred, he said.

The acts occurred between May 2003 and October 2004, according to the arrest warrant.

Hallman was charged with four counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and one count each of criminal sexual conduct involving a person under the age of 13, third-degree criminal sexual conduct and accosting children for immoral purposes.

By the Associated Press

Trial begins for accused Fenton husband

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Wednesday, August 17, 2005

By Paul Janczewski pjanczewski@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6333

Robert T. Parks choked his wife to death "with his bare hands" in their Fenton apartment, a prosecutor told jurors in opening statements at his murder trial.

Mark Berkman, a former assistant Genesee County prosecutor now serving that same role in Oakland County, said Parks is the killer because he was the only person, besides their 2-year-old son, with Jessica Andrews-Parks the night she died of asphyxiation by manual strangulation. But Parks' attorney, Anthony Vance, said his client is falsely accused and Andrews-Parks was involved in a serious car crash days before her death and had not been feeling well the night she died.

The nine-man, five-woman jury will hear from more than two dozen witnesses over the next few weeks in the trial before Genesee Circuit Judge Judith A. Fullerton.

Andrews-Parks, 28, was found nude in her bed Sept. 3, 2004, and resuscitation efforts by paramedics were unsuccessful.

Parks, 32, told people she had overdosed on medications.

The cause of death was ruled inconclusive at first, but later tests revealed likely signs of manual strangulation, according to Oakland County Medical Examiner Ljubisa J. Dragovic.

Witnesses are also expected to say that Parks was seeing other women and that Andrews-Parks suffered from emotional abuse from his infidelity and fathering another child with a woman in Indiana. Berkman said she planned to leave her husband.

Vance and his co-counsel, Mark Latchana, hope to discredit much of that testimony.

One person whose actions will be closely questioned is Dr. Valery Alexandrov, who performed the autopsy under supervision by Dragovic.

CONTINUED

Trial begins for accused Fenton husband

Page 2 of 2

Vance called him a "dishonest doctor" because Alexandrov was forced to resign from the office after being charged with shoplifting.

Vance also said there were no marks on her neck to indicate strangulation and no indications of physical abuse during their relationship.

Vance and Latchana also plan to attack witnesses who claim the marriage was strained. They said Andrews-Parks was also seeing others.

They said Parks was not charged with the slaying until months after her death and only because her family pressured police and prosecutors.

He had moved to East Chicago, Ind., with the couple's 3-year-old son.

Prior to trial, Parks declined an initial plea deal, and another deal was offered this week. The details were not placed on the record.

Parks and his wife had been in Fenton less than year after leaving Indiana so he could take a retail security job with Target.

Andrews-Parks was working at a local bank and was preparing to begin teaching English at Davenport University in Flint.

Caretaker accused of stealing from elderly woman

Wednesday, August 17, 2005

By Lisa Medendorp

CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

A bank statement received by family members after an 85-year-old woman died last month revealed that a live-in caretaker had stolen more than \$1,700, according to Norton Shores police. Detective Elmer Ogg said police now have subpoenaed the elderly woman's bank records as part of an ongoing investigation.

Cindy Jeanne Roy, 48, of 216 First, Whitehall, was arraigned Thursday in 60th District Court on charges of embezzling more than \$1,000 but less than \$20,000 from a vulnerable adult and uttering and publishing.

Judge Michael J. Nolan set bail at \$50,000 cash or surety.

Court records show Roy, who is currently on probation, has previous convictions for possessing a controlled substance, obtaining a controlled substance by fraud and uttering and publishing, thus enhancing any prison sentence she might receive if convicted.

Ogg said Roy grew up with members of the elderly woman's family.

"They helped her in the past," he said, and although they knew of her alleged problem with prescription drugs, "they felt sorry for her."

Roy was recovering from surgery and the elderly woman needed help around the house and couldn't drive, Ogg said.

The elderly woman's children "thought the two of them could help each other enough to get by when they couldn't be there," Ogg said.

When the victim's 48-year-old daughter made a complaint to police on Aug. 5, she said that when Roy moved in, she was warned: "We know your history. Don't do anything like this to our mother," Ogg said.

Roy moved into the elderly woman's home on Arborway Drive in February. Ogg said that when Roy recuperated from surgery, she started running errands and paying bills for the woman. The family "thought everything was OK," he said.

But when the family got the first bank statement after their mother's death on July 20, they found a number of canceled checks that had not been signed by their mother, police said.

Ogg said the checks ranged from \$75 to \$275 apiece, and the signature definitely was not the elderly woman's because samples of her handwriting on other checks were available. The detective said the family then was unable to locate any bank statements from March forward, resulting in the subpoena to the bank.

Preliminary examination in the case has been set for Aug. 25.

Inkster to meet tonight on senior meals funds

Services could end if cuts approved

August 17, 2005

BY MELANIE D. SCOTT
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Homebound meals, food delivery and transportation services will be in jeopardy if Inkster cuts most of Inkster Senior Services Inc.'s funding.

Earlier this month, the Inkster City Council said it was considering slashing the organization's funding by as much as 74%, which could mean a loss of \$86,000.

A special budget meeting will be held at 6:30 tonight at the Booker T. Dozier Recreation Complex, 2025 Middlebelt.

For the past four years, Inkster Senior Services has received \$115,500 a year from the city. If the proposed cut is approved, the organization would receive only about \$29,500 from the city.

Inkster officials did not return calls to the Free Press on Tuesday.

"This would pretty much shut it down," said Denise Champagne, director of the organization.

"I'm not sure how we could operate. We've never had to face this, so we can't make plans."

The nonprofit agency operated by the city serves 856 Inkster seniors and helps deliver more than 28,000 meals across western Wayne County each week. More than 160 hot and cold meals are delivered in Inkster alone.

Some Inkster seniors say they will attend the budget meeting even though they don't use the organization's services.

"I just don't think it's necessary," said 74-year-old Geraldine Calhoun of the proposed cuts. "I'm going to let them know that."

The majority of the organization's funding comes from the city, with smaller amounts from the Senior Alliance Inc. for transportation and senior center staffing and Cherry Hill Place, an Inkster-based senior housing community.

Said Claude McReynolds, 70: "I don't understand why they want to take money from seniors. We already have to pay for our medicine."

The organization receives about \$10,000 a year, from private donations, Champagne said.

"We expected some cuts, but this is a little extreme," Champagne said.

The funding cut also would affect the Wayne County Senior Citizens' Services Homebound Meal Delivery program as well.

"Although we are funded federally, we have a cooperative with Inkster" that "assists us heavily with meal delivery," said Kevin Kelley, director of Wayne County Senior Citizens' Services and Veterans Affairs. "If the budget is cut and the drivers are eliminated, we would try to work out an alternative."

One alternative could be distributing emergency food to homebound seniors until regular meal delivery could be restored, said Carol Scott, services manager for Wayne County Senior Citizens' Services.

"We have a lot of committed employees who are willing to prevent meals from being stopped, even if it meant delivering meals on our lunch hours," said Greg Stevens, supervisor of the

home-delivered meals and liquid-nutrition departments for the county's senior program. "It's not something we could keep up, but we would try."

Contact MELANIE D. SCOTT at 248-351-3681 or scott@freepress.com.

Family anxious as work set to begin on Habitat home

Wednesday, August 17, 2005

By Shandra Martinez

The Grand Rapids Press

HOLLAND TOWNSHIP -- If all goes as planned, Heather Stacy and her two daughters could spend Christmas in their new three-bedroom home.

"I'm so excited," said Stacy, adding that she is thrilled her daughters, Alix, 12, and Abbey, 3, will soon have a back yard to play in.

The process began two years ago when she first applied with Lakeshore Habitat for Humanity. She wasn't selected the first time around and decided to reapply.

"I'm so glad I didn't give up," said Stacy, who runs a home day care.

The construction process was expected to begin formally this morning with a ground-breaking ceremony at 3324 Renwick Court.

The partners on the project are nine local banks that have raised sponsorship money and will volunteer on-site to make Stacy's dream of homeownership come true.

They are Bank One, Byron Bank, Comerica, Fifth Third Bank, Macatawa Bank, Republic Bank, Standard Federal, Wells Fargo Home Mortgage and West Michigan Community Bank.

The idea of the collaboration took hold during a meeting between West Michigan Community Bank and Lakeshore Habitat for Humanity and grew to include nine banks sponsoring a house this year, explained Susan Machiela, director of development for Lakeshore Habitat for Humanity.

"It is a very visible way for these organizations to give back to the community they serve," Machiela said.

Stacy, a single mother, is excited that the location of her new home will allow her daughters to continue to attend Zeeland Public Schools. She is a 1993 graduate of Zeeland High School. The home will be part of Wyndover Acres, a subdivision on the northeast corner of 112th and Riley Street. This is the second Habitat home to go up in the Holland Township development.

This is the second house Lakeshore Habitat for Humanity has started since the completion of the five houses this spring that were part of the 2005 Jimmy Carter Work project. The organization hopes to build nine more houses by July 1.

"It costs about \$100 per square foot to build a Habitat house in the Lakeshore area," said Nila La Duke, the organization's executive director. "We live in a very caring community, but there are still many families in need of safe, decent and affordable houses in our region."

Habitat houses are sold to the homeowner-partners upon completion of construction and the families' required sweat-equity hours. The mortgages are held by Lakeshore Habitat at a zero interest loan.

Since Lakeshore Habitat's creation 15 years ago, 71 home have been built in the region which stretches from Lake Michigan to east of Zeeland, and from M-89 north to M-45 to the south.

Teen vanishes year after dad's slaying

MT. MORRIS TOWNSHIP

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Wednesday, August 17, 2005

By Bryn Mickle bmickle@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6383

MT. MORRIS TWP. - A 16-year-old boy has disappeared just weeks before the first anniversary of his father's slaying.

Bar'Ontay Bradshaw's mother is worried he is in danger.

"I'm afraid he's going to get hurt," said Sarah L. Knighten. "I don't want him to hurt anyone and I don't want him to get hurt."

Monday will mark one year since Bar'Ontay's father, Roderick, was shot to death inside an E. Julia Avenue home.

A 65-year-old Flint man has been tried twice for the slaying, but was acquitted in April after an earlier trial ended in a hung jury.

Police have said the suspect, Haywood M. Johnson Sr., believed Bradshaw played a role in the slaying of Johnson's son years earlier.

Investigators, however, have said they don't believe Roderick Bradshaw was involved in killing Johnson's son.

The outcome of Johnson's trial upset Bar'Ontay, and Knighten has been worried how her son was dealing with Bradshaw's death.

The boy was close to his father, and after the slaying he began wearing a T-shirt with his father's picture on it.

"I didn't know how he was going to take this month," Knighten said.

CONTINUED

Teen vanishes year after dad's slaying

Page 2 of 2

Her fears were realized Aug. 5 when she came home about 1:30 a.m. and found her O'Toole Lane home unlocked and empty. She thought maybe Bar'Ontay had gone to a friend's home, but called police when her phone calls failed to locate him. The teen has never run away before and none of his clothes were missing, Knighten said.

He is supposed to start ninth grade at Hamady High School this fall.

Township police have classified Bar'Ontay as a runaway, and Knighten said she is running out of options.

State police declined to issue an Amber Alert for him because he did not meet criteria that would lead police to believe he was abducted, according to police reports.

Township police could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

"He's my priority. He's my son," Knighten said.

Bar'Ontay is 5-foot-11, 180 pounds with brown eyes. He was last seen wearing a white T-shirt with a picture of his father on it, black faded denim shorts and black and red New Balance tennis shoes.

Anyone with information is asked to call township police at (810) 785-1311 or Knighten at (810) 922-1503.

The Ann Arbor News

August 17, 2005

Learning Institute gives thanks to its volunteers

The Family Learning Institute of Ann Arbor would like to thank all of our volunteers who served as reading and writing coaches and discussion group leaders this past year.

The institute, a non-profit community-based organization, helps low-income Ann Arbor students who are reading below grade level to improve their reading, writing, thinking and communication skills.

Without our volunteers, many of our students would not get the additional support needed to become proficient readers and will continue to underperform in school.

While too numerous to name individually, 115 reading coaches donated over 2,000 hours working one-on-one with our students and another five generously donated other specialized skills and talents to the organization.

The institute received an ample donation of books from the community and computers were donated by Washtenaw Community College.

We will begin the new year in September and are in need of additional volunteers. This is a wonderful way to make a contribution to your community.

Lefiest H. Galimore, Ann Arbor

Family guide goes online

Wednesday, August 17, 2005

The Grand Rapids Press

KENT COUNTY -- A listing of programs and services available to families and children in Kent County now is online. The Family Resource Guide Online is available at familyresourceguide.info. The guide, published by the Child and Family Resource Council, lists more than 900 social service programs and agencies in the county. The Web site also features a searchable calendar of community events and support groups. A free print version of the guide is available by calling 454-4673.

MIRS
August 16, 2005

Former Iowa Administrator Coming To DHS

The former human services administrator in Iowa is coming to Michigan to be the state's new deputy director for Children's Services for the Department of Human Services (DHS).

James **HENNESSEY** had worked in Washington D.C. as a consultant after his time in Iowa. He starts in Lansing on Aug. 29. His goal is to oversee adoptions, foster care and protective services. He will have administrative oversight of the independent Children's Trust fund.

"Jim Hennessey brings comprehensive knowledge and capability in children's services to Michigan," said DHS Director Marianne **UDOW**. "He has considerable experience, both working inside state government and in the administration of programs that serve children. He is a valuable addition to our management team."

Before becoming the vice president of Denver-based Policy Studies, Hennessey worked for the Iowa Department of Human Services in a number of positions of ascending importance and responsibility. He was chief of its bureau of collections for 10 years and was responsible for directing the Iowa child support program.

Michigan Report

August 16, 2005

CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIRECTOR: Department of Human Services Director Marianne Udow announced Tuesday the appointment of James Hennessey as deputy director for Children's Services with the Department of Human Services. Mr. Hennessey, a consultant and former Iowa human services administrator, will oversee children and family services, such as adoption, foster care and protective services. He will take his post on Monday, August 29.